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Role of Scientific Research Institutes in the Practical
Activities of Public Health Services

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WAYS AND MEANS IN WHICH THE SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH INSTITUTE
PARTICIPATES IN THE PRACTICAL WORK OF PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

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The Leningrad Institute of Labor Hygiene and Occupational
Diseases is giving special attention to regular scientific-practi-
cal work and organization of help to public health organizations
in accordance with a previously worked out plan.

The ultimate goal of the work of all public health organi-
zations is to reduce the sickness rate and increase the longevity
of the population. In connection with this, one of the primary
phases of the institute's work consists in giving help to public
health organizations in the initiation of programs to reduce the
sickness rate. The institute, considering it expedient to coordi-
nate the activity of the scientific-research workers of the large
scientific center and the practical public health workers,
organized a city and rayon commission to reduce the sickness rate,
after having worked out the appropriate proposals about them, which
were confirmed by the Leningrad City Public Health Department. The
city commission's orders are to be carried out by the rayon com-
missions for reducing the sickness rate. The institute's most

skilled workers are consultants to the city and rayon commissions for reducing the sickness rate.

The most interesting and most promising form of work is the coordination of the work of many institutes. In 1951 the Institute of Labor Hygiene and Occupational Diseases is coordinating its work with the Ear, Nose, Throat, and Speech Institute to reduce the sickness rate from angina, with the Institute for the Protection of Labor of the VTsSPS to improve sanitary working conditions for groups of workers who manufacture or use qualitative electrodes, with the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology for improving the sanitary working conditions of people whose occupations involve considerable physical strain. The many-sided work of the institutes is carried out in conjunction with the practical activity of the medical-sanitation section of the industrial enterprise.

The many-sided work of the institute and of the practical doctors of the public health organizations completely justified itself in the fight to reduce diseases of the cutaneous and subcutaneous cellular tissue among Leningrad industrial workers. The carrying out of a whole set of measures through the city commission to reduce the sickness rate, the tendency on the part of the ROKK active, the trade union membership, enterprise administrations and safety engineers to put into operation prophylactic measures against purulent diseases has had its results.

If in 1947 the indexes for cutaneous and subcutaneous cellular tissue diseases among Leningrad industrial workers were higher than they had been in the previous 10 years, after a variety of measures were carried out in 1948, 1949, and 1950 a steady re-

duction in these diseases could be achieved.

A study of the materials of the rayon commissions for the reduction of the sickness rate showed that the sickness rate, connected in some degree with unfavorable working conditions, depends on unsatisfactory sanitary engineering equipment and insufficient applications of prophylactic measures by both the administration and the medical workers of enterprises. The commission for reducing the sickness rate turned its attention to the registration of illnesses. Since mass registration takes place according to form 3--1, a large group of diseases (sometimes up to 35 percent of the diseases) are put in the group of "other" diseases: the percentage of this group of "other" diseases is disproportionately great and makes it impossible to get a proper picture of the nature of the diseases. An analysis of the group of "other" diseases showed that such illnesses as hypertonia, eye diseases, ear, nose, throat diseases, chronic gastritis, bronchitis, pleurisy (non-tubercular), kidney diseases, appendicitis, should be taken from the group of "others" and be considered on an equal level with the principal nosological units of registration form 3--1.

The institute pays much attention to increasing the skill of the sanitation doctors, doctors of the medical-sanitation sections and public health stations of industrial enterprises, and doctors of offices for juveniles. This work is conducted in courses devoted to a definite question, for example, courses in occupational pathology, courses in industrial sanitation, courses for doctors doing periodical medical examinations. In these courses the

laboratory physicians were given assignments. The institute's consultants continued the work begun in the courses, further helping the workers of the rayon polyclinics when they did their periodic medical examinations. The work to increase skill was carried on both in Leningrad and in other cities and oblasts of the republic. A 10 day course was held for the doctors of the RSFSR on preventive industrial-sanitation inspection.

An independent program of studies was drawn up for doctors serving the workers of separate branches of industry. The courses were also for doctors' aides -- surgeon's assistants and nurses.

In addition to the courses there are seminars and regular conferences on labor hygiene, industrial sanitation and the organization of public health in industrial enterprises. Those who participate in such conferences are doctors of public health stations, medical-sanitation sections, enterprises, doctors of sanitation-epidemiological stations, State sanitation inspectors, doctors representing trade unions, doctors from juvenile offices. In 1949 and 1950, 38 such conferences were held. The conference program included clinical analysis of patients undergoing cure in the institute, reports on subjects of prophylaxis of occupational poisonings and illnesses, the fight against industrial injury, the organization of the work of shop doctors, doctors treating juvenile workers, etc.

Once a quarter a specialized conference is held, for example, on silicosis, toxicology of industrial poisons, hygiene of lighting.

In addition, colloquia on problems of preventive sanitation inspection are organized at the institute, where the doctors and the engineers examine plans for new industrial construction and for the reconstruction of industrial buildings. Especially complex projects which were not approved by the State sanitary inspectorate are turned over for consultation.

A bureau of professional consultation works at the institute. Consultations and specialized laboratories -- in chemistry, toxicology, dust, physics -- are given.

The consultations can take the form of a chat or a demonstration connected with the laboratory work, or may be given in written form in answer to an inquiry which requires the consultant's preliminary acquaintance with literature or laboratory work.

The institute also gives help in putting into practice the principle of the shop doctor's district work in industry. An investigation of the work of shop doctors in 1950 showed that in many plants the doctors serve the primary, leading plant shops while in others they serve all the shops. In such cases one doctor has to serve 10-12 shops. In the introduction of the shop principle of medical-sanitation service to workers, the following difficulties are encountered: (1) lack of nurses, who help the shop doctor; (2) a great number of records with information on the doctor's work. It must also be pointed out that not all the forms of records are provided by TsUNKhY; part of the forms and the information are managed by order of the inspectors of the rayon and city departments of public health; (3) overtaxing the doctor with medical

work, since one doctor has to handle 35-40 patients per day, and during vacations the doctors who stay behind replace those who have gone; (4) not carrying out sufficiently the shop principle of serving night shifts, because of insufficient staff units in the medical-sanitation section; (5) not enough training of medical doctors at polyclinics questions of hygiene and occupational pathology.

Spreading knowledge on occupational hygiene and pathology among the people is done by giving lectures for the workers and doctors and by issuing books on methodology for doctors in medical-sanitation sections. This work is done in close conjunction with the House of Sanitation Education of the Leningrad City Public Health Department. The institute's workers are part of the methodological council of the House of Sanitation Education.

A form of work which recommends itself well are the institute's training sessions held right at the enterprises, in the houses of culture either at plants or in the districts of the city. The peculiarities and specifications of the region or enterprise are considered in its selection for lectures and speeches at the sessions. The speeches are preceded by an examination of the workers' working conditions and an analysis of data on the sickness rate. The plants' radio stations and those of the city are also used. Part of the speeches are written on film. Special attention is given to putting scientific achievements into practice in industrial work; the forms of putting these achievements into practice vary. To do this the appropriate reports are

made for engineer-technical workers in the palaces of technics and information letters are sent directly to the plants. The protective devices and instruments suggested by the institute are also tested directly in industry.

In accordance with statements by State sanitation inspectors, doctors of sanitation-epidemiological stations, the administration of industrial enterprises, and also in connection with the operations plan, the institute conducted an investigation of the sanitary conditions of labor at the enterprises. In the case of drawing up the hygienic characteristics of new processes, such works of the institute terminated in the working out of sanitation regulations.

Important basic problems for example, the problem of producing sanitary engineering equipment, of manufacturing new safety devices and equipment, of safety in work and the technique of safety, of gas-protecting stations, were explained at special report sessions.

The institute's operations plan was drawn up taking into consideration the enquiries of industrial enterprises. The enterprises' declarations are discussed at workers' meetings and conferences of stakhanovite workers, innovators, rationalizers and medical workers of the enterprise. The plan of scientific-practical work of the institutes of the Leningrad City Public Health Department was examined at larger meeting of the institute's scientific council participated in by workers from the municipal and rayon sanitation-epidemiological stations.

The measures carried out by the institute made it possible to set up a close bond between industrial enterprises and the medical-sanitation sections of the enterprises and helping the practical workers in public health, provided an opportunity to take note of acute topics for the further scientific-research and practical works of the institute.